

# CIRCLE MAGAZINE

AUBURN UNIVERSITY'S GENERAL INTEREST MAGAZINE

FALL 1986

COVER STORY:  
NUCLEAR MATERIALS ON CAMPUS: ARE WE SAFE?



# CIRCLE MAGAZINE

## EDITOR'S NOTE

Well, here it is. You hold it in your hand. It's our baby, and we've worked hard to raise it right. Probably it's not quite ready to step out into the world, probably has a few areas that could use a little work yet, but it was time for this brat to move out and stand on its own. We have another one on the way.

We could print only 4,000 copies because we have only so much money in our budget, which is plenished by student activity fees as allocated by the SGA. Let a friend borrow your copy of the *Circle* for a couple of days so that more people get a chance to see the magazine. If you're the friend borrowing it and feel it's unfair that you must mooch a campus publication funded by your activity fees, write your SGA senator, or call him. Better than that, visit him—you can probably find him in Foy Union. Tell him you want a *Circle* of your own.

And come see us, too. We need all kinds of help, not just in the areas people usually think of as magazine work. You don't have to be a writer or lay-out artist to fill a need at the *Circle*. In fact, you don't have to be much of anything except willing. Our office is temporarily in Cater Hall. Go in the front door, turn right down the hall, and walk through the last door on the right. There we'll be. To call, dial 4710 and ask for the *Circle*.



David Wimberley,  
Editor

## A NOTE ON STYLE

**CIRCLE MAGAZINE**, financed by student activity fees, serves as a forum for the writers and artists within the university community. It aims to appeal to a diverse Auburn audience by providing a variety of articles, essays, short stories, poetry, art and photography. The views expressed throughout the issue are those of the authors, not necessarily those of the publisher (the Board of Student Communications) or those of the Auburn Circle Editorial Board and staff.

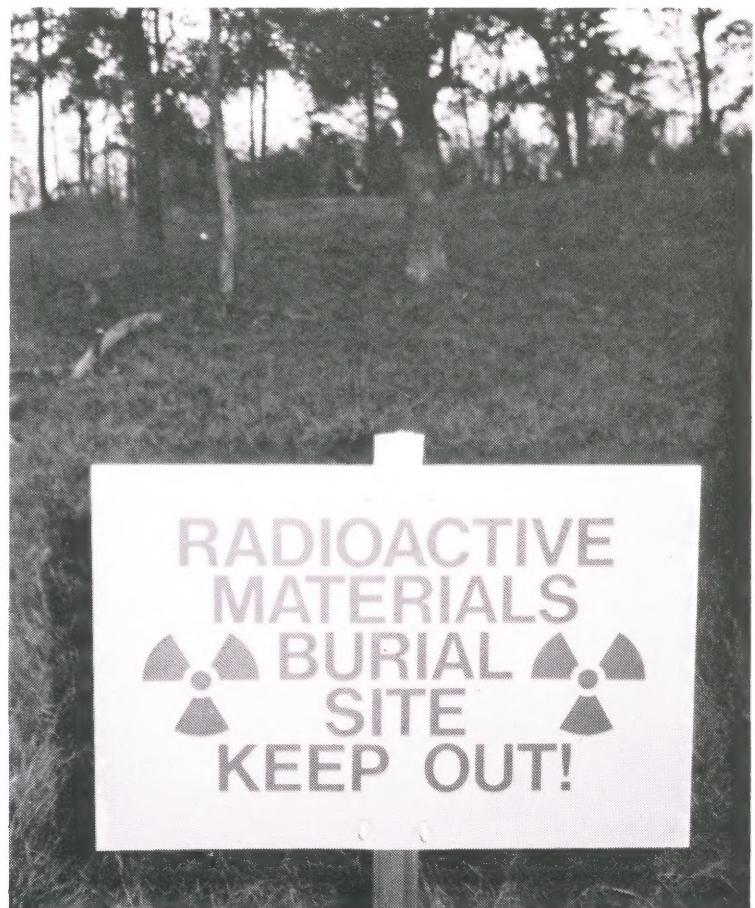
Circle Magazine

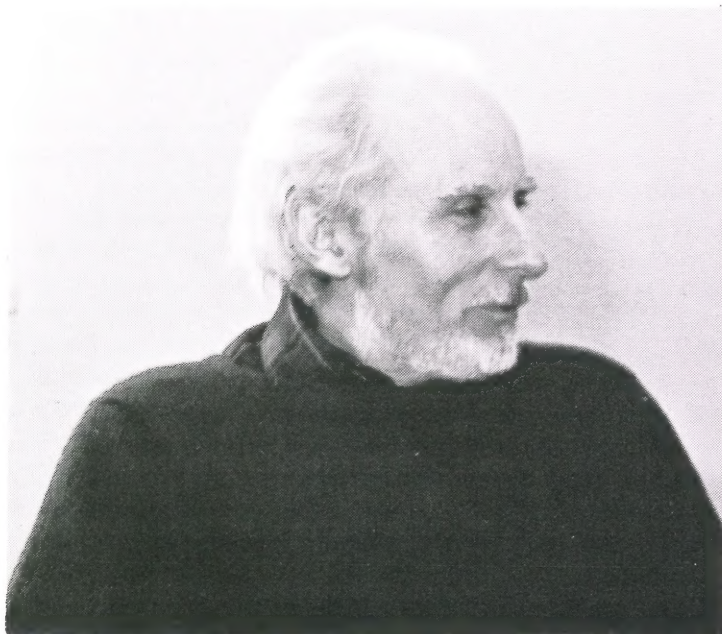
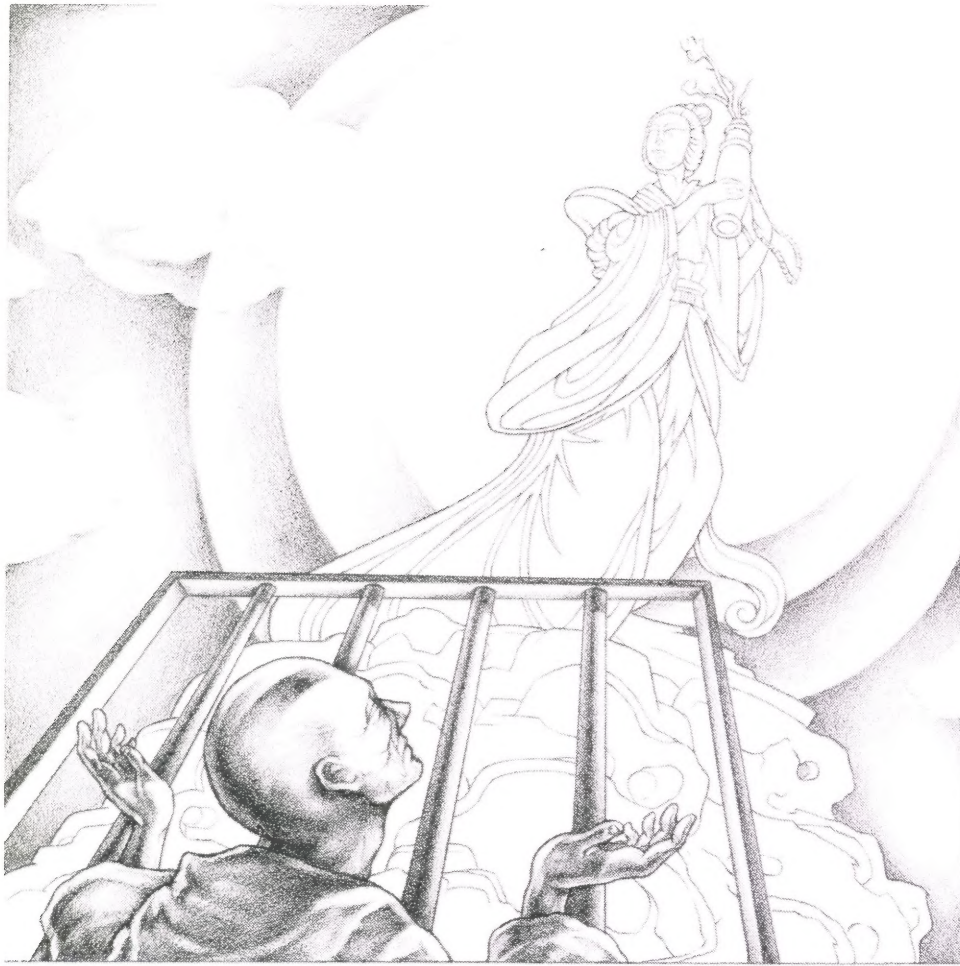
Fall 1986, Volume 12, Number 2

© Copyright 1986 by *Circle Magazine*. All rights reserved by the individual artists, authors and photographers—who grant this magazine one time serial rights only.

# CONTENTS

INTERVIEW: DR. WARD ALLEN	4
FICTION: ANOTHER DAY OF SHOP-TALK IN THE PRETTY PARLOR	6
THE DOWNSIDE RISK	8
INTERVIEW: NANCY LEWIS	9
WILL THE IRON BOWL RUST?	12
BOOK REVIEW	13
NUCLEAR MATERIALS ON CAMPUS: ARE WE SAFE?	14
FICTION: THE VISION	17
INTERVIEW: JACK GILBERT	20
KICKING AND PUNCHING, AU STYLE	22
FINE ARTS	24
FICTION: THE STAND IN	26
CONTRIBUTORS	28
POETRY THROUGHOUT	





20

## CIRCLE MAGAZINE

### Editor

David Wimberley

### Assistant Editor

Kyle Logue

### Art Director

Lori Lodwick

### Assistant Art Director

Bruce Carpenter

### Advisor

Ruth Schowalter

### Business Manager

Karen Price

### Feature Editors

Helen Brock

Amy E. Henderson

### Fiction Editor

Tom Neeley

### Poetry Editor

Tom Hilliard

### Office Manager

Liz Shaffer

### Publicity Manager

Melissa Dickson

### Editorial Assistants

Sumarie Bass

Kelly Caldwell

Amy W. Henderson

Mitch Henry

Frankie Minor

Theresa Rudy

### Student Editorial Board

Scott Beckey

Becky Bell

Kari Moroney

### Faculty Editorial Board

Glenn Anderson

Julie Dayvault

Sheila Eckman

Mickey Logue

Arthur Wilke

Fabian Worsham

# INTERVIEW: DR. WARD ALLEN

by Tom Neeley and Liz Shaffer

"Each morning I'm going to get up and open my books and study while my mind is fresh. That's why I'm retiring. At one time, when you're young, you can teach your classes, go home, and your mind's still fresh enough to study. Now I go home, and by evening my mind's exhausted, so I don't have as much time for my work as I want. I'm looking forward to rising each morning—by 4 a.m.—and being at my books. There's so much to learn. You'll never get it all, but you get a chance to pick up a little more."

Dr. Ward Allen, one of the more colorful professors in the English Department, is retiring this year. A native son of Nashville, Tennessee, he received all three of his degrees at Vanderbilt University where he studied with the Agrarians. His teachers were the founders of New Criticism, an analytic criticism that focuses on the form of a literary work noting language, imagery, and emotional or intellectual tensions.

Dr. Allen came to Auburn in 1964 and was made a Hargis Professor in 1973. His specialty is Renaissance literature, but in his twenty-two years here he's seen a lot of changes and has added to his pre-Auburn education.

Some of the best classroom training Dr. Allen feels he has had was studying Latin. The discipline in memory training has stayed with him.

"You train your (mental) faculty with Latin, and you make a good detective. You notice things out in the world.

"I should have been a detective, as a matter of fact, because of that training in Latin.

"Once you've been trained in Latin, you



Dr. Allen walking through the woods near his home.

- Photograph by Eric Bagwell

have to look at endings, you have to look at roots, you have to look at the arrangement of the words and such. You see, that's one of the great powers of Latin. In English we have to put words in order because they're not inflected, they don't have those endings that show what words go together and the relationship of the word to the sentence. In Latin, a writer can put words in any order he wants, for the ending shows its function in the sentence. So, in poetry by Virgil, for instance, you'll have an adjective—you've got to hold it in your mind—forty words later, there's the noun it goes with.

"You can see how it's the perfect training for a detective; he's got to keep everything in mind that he sees."

When Dr. Allen was at Vanderbilt, he knew and studied under thirty-two of the Agrarians—writers like John Crowe Ransom, Donald Davidson, and Allen Tate, who were some of the founders of New Criticism. He says that Vanderbilt in the 1940's was very much like Auburn is today, meaning a good percentage of the student body and the faculty were from within the state. At Vanderbilt, about one third of the students were from the Nashville area, knowing each other well, sharing a common background.

"The view that attracted me to the Agrarians was that they were thinking about the community as a community. They were worried that their book *I'll Take My Stand* had been turned too heavily to the economic. For instance, Mr. Allen Tate's essay is on religion, and Mr. Donald Davidson's essay is on art. When you think about a society, you ask yourself the

question, 'What art came out of that society?' So, Davidson, typical to his thought, has an essay on why the modern South has the great literature. He began with the question, 'How is it that Mississippi schools always rate the lowest on sociological scales, but out of them come William Faulkner, Eudora Welty, those people the Harvard professors write about?' And then, he moves to the proposition that perhaps the scales are false, which he believed. You see, the scales never ask, 'How many years of Latin does your high school offer?'; they ask, 'How many square-feet does the gymnasium have?' "

"I had many courses under Donald Davidson, but I only had one course under John Crowe Ransom in Shakespeare. What was he like? He was fast in mind and heard every word you said. If you want to know what he was like as a teacher, the best essay I know is by the poet Anthony Hecht, who studied under Ransom. It appeared in the magazine *The American Scholar*, and it's reprinted in a book of essays on great teachers that's edited by Jacob Epstein, the editor of *The American Scholar*. It is a fine book to read because it is made up of essays by men (who became great men) talking about their great teachers."

Dr. Allen's education wasn't entirely in the classrooms of Vanderbilt. One of the jobs he held before he came to Auburn was as an office clerk at a scrap iron business. His job was to call factories for scrap brass, but he found he mostly just sat around and watched. His boss was a delightful old Jewish man, Louis B. Klein, known as Uncle Louis. Dr. Allen said that his job at the scrap iron yard wasn't really work, but being educated by Uncle Louis.

"Uncle Louis taught me a lot. I'll tell you one thing he taught me.

"You don't meet many people—I think I've maybe met two or three at most—for whom enough's enough. You know, as wealthy as you become, you always want to be careful to invest and make more money—you notice that.

"One day I was sitting in Uncle Louis' office—this was 1955—and he called the Frazer Motor Company, and he told them to 'send me a black, four-door Plymouth with a white top, air-conditioning, power steering, and power brakes. When it comes in, send it to me,' and he hung up the phone.

"I said, 'Uncle Louis, you pay cash for everything. Why don't you do like other

people; go up to Frazer Motor Company and get \$1,000 off the price?"

" 'What could I do with it?' he said. 'That salesman who answered the phone probably likes a drink when he gets home, just like I do. That \$1,000 will buy it for him for the next five years.'

"Here's something else that I learned from Uncle Louis, that he learned from his daddy. His daddy told him, 'Don't hold anything you can be happy without. If you just have to own the house you live in, if you are miserable without owning it, go ahead and buy it. And if you just have to own the business property where your business is, go ahead and buy that. But no more. It's just cluttering your mind when you have things you rent, things you have to take care of.'

"You see, Uncle Louis had a lot of good teaching, and his daddy did, too."

Colleges have changed much since Dr. Allen was a student, changed more than he can say. He's seen a lot on this Auburn campus and has thought about it. What he has to say should not be taken without a smile sometimes. . .

To improve the College of Liberal Arts at Auburn. . .

"Establish a department of classical studies—a *big* department—and require all students who are going to become detectives to take Latin and Greek. . . We have criminal justice, why not a degree in being a detective (four years of Latin required to teach them how to notice.)"

Should a teacher leave his own moral ideas out of the classroom or bring them in?

"The best teachers I've had have brought them in. . . you knew where they stood, they didn't attempt to pretend to be neutral. I don't think you ought to lecture your students or turn your literary courses into sermons—no preaching. There's a great difference."

To describe Auburn in 1964. . .

"Take all the good things of Auburn that are left and multiply them. It was like that.

"I don't want to sound critical of the modern generation; you can discourage people by being cynical about them and their way of life. Well, I notice this because I walk to and from school, and I walk across the campus: that a common sight has become uncommon. The common sight was that you saw people walking along by themselves with happy, cheerful looks on their faces, sometimes laughing to themselves, sometimes smiling. Now I've

noticed, as I walk at, say, 7:30 in the morning, you see students and they don't have that happy cheer in their faces. But this is a kind of mystery. You wonder, 'Maybe I better not speak to them; they look like they don't want to be spoken to.' But then you speak to them, and their faces break out with good cheer.

"What would you say might be the difference in life to take away a happy disposition when you're by yourself just walking along?"

As for a particular philosophy of life. . .

"I believe the creed of the church. I believe God brought all things into being out of nothingness. . . it's a remarkable work. . . there's proof of providence. Providence never works in a straight way. As an old Episcopal priest once told me, God works in mischievous ways, his blunders to perform."

Favorite authors:

"They're all my favorites, but you might put down some: Shakespeare, Thomas Hardy, William Faulkner. They're all such a surprise. They're so different, just like human beings; you'll never know what you're going to run into."

Favorite modern, living authors:

"I would say Eudora Welty, but I've just read Anthony Hecht, so I'd better say Anthony Hecht. Then there's Robert Penn Warren. . . How can you say? It's the one you're reading at the minute."

During his retirement which begins in June, he'll find more to say about that and everything else. His Southern mannerisms and quick eyes will not be Auburn University's anymore, but one of its claims to fame. Oh, there's no real leaving of Dr. Allen. He'll still be noticing things and reading his books, along with his wife, (who is smarter than him, he's proud to say; she graduated higher in her class at Vanderbilt (second) than he did in his), living in their farm-style house south of the campus off Donahue Drive. In the meantime, he'll also sit back and let his four children and four grandchildren fulfill one other hope:

"I have hopes that God will let me live long enough so my obituary will say something like fifty-six grandchildren, forty-two great grandchildren. I admire those. . . Don't you like the obituary of a man who's really populated the world? Every now and then you run across that kind where he just has an enormous number of descendants. You know, you feel he's done his duty in the world."

# ANOTHER DAY OF SHOP-TALK IN THE PRETTY PARLOR

by Marian Motley-Carcache

Voncille Dismukes put Edith Hendricks, her Friday noon shampoo and set, under dryer 2, arranged cotton wads around her ears, and handed her a *People* magazine. Then she set the dryer on medium heat, the timer on thirty minutes, and turned the noisy machine on. In about fifteen minutes Edith would call for a Tab and some Cheese-o's and ask loudly, "Ain't I done yet?" Voncille knew her customers. She made it a point to know them. She had told Victor countless times, "It pays to know your clients because your clients is your business."

Voncille figured she'd have just enough time before Edith called her to get Lucille Lacey rolled for her perm. She placed a clean white towel around Lucille's shoulders and clipped it securely in front with a metal clip. Lucille, who had been listening to "Newsbrief" on the miniature T.V. that Dora kept at her station so her clients could keep up with their stories, said, "Well, taxes is here again and they say they're cracking down. They say they're tightening up on evaders this year. My Harry used to say it looked like to him they was trying to put the little man out of business."

Voncille knew they were on dangerous ground. Harry had only been gone a month. After thirty years of marriage, he had run off with the 25-year-old girl who ran the K-Mart deli. Voncille could see that Lucille, in spite of the Valium, was priming to cry. She hastily jumped on the subject of taxes to take Lucille's mind off Harry.

"I never have held back one red cent from the IRS," she said quickly. "I've reported every eyebrow hot wax, every tweezer, every set on the side. And I'm sure I could easily have slipped by on a few trips to the new tannin' bed, but I believe in the truth." Voncille's ears rang to hear herself say such. She couldn't count how many dollar bills she'd slipped straight into her pocket.

Betty Beaford, Dora's client in Chair 3, spoke up in a disgusted tone to say that her husband Carlton said "Render unto Caesar" but that if she ever came across a dollar bill, she was spending it quicker than a flash. Everyone knew that Carlton Beaford was religious. Betty came in every Friday with stories of how ever since he'd retired all he'd done was to sit in the recliner in his undershorts and socks, wearing a big cross necklace around his neck, and watch Christian T.V. The change that had come over Carlton infuriated

Betty. She said their whole diet had changed since now he refused to eat deviled eggs, deviled ham, and devil's food cake.

Lucille broke in to say, "at least, Betty, you've still got him. At least he didn't get a permanent wave and run off with the Whore of Babylon during International Days at the deli with a gold chain around his neck."

Betty leveled her gaze directly into Lucille's eyes and said, "Hell Lucille, Harry'll be back. He's just going through a mid-life crisis. I heard all about it from Tammy Faye. Once he feels like a man again, he'll come dragging home with his tail tucked.

"Voncille, hon, how 'bout some Tab cola and some Cheese-its?," called Edith, much to Voncille's relief. As Voncille chirped, "Sure honey and they're fresh. The Cheese-o man just left," and grabbed the Allen wrench that opened the Coke machine, she heard Lucille answer, "You can call it what you want to, but if you ask me, there's no fool like an old fool and I don't even know if I'd take him back. I might catch something from that floozy from the deli that's makin' him feel like a man."

"No you wouldn't," Betty assured her. "She couldn't work with food if she hadn't been tested."

Voncille found herself wishing she could shove one or the other of the women under a dryer. The conversation was making her nervous. She realized that good clean gossip was all part of the job, but this conversation, for some reason, seemed to be going just a little too far. It was too personal. But Voncille had hardly even gotten started on Lucille's perm and Dora was taking her sweet time on Betty's set.

Voncille took pride in her beauty shop and somehow she felt that it was being violated by such talk. It was by far the nicest, most up-to-date beautitorium in Lester. She recently installed two new stations, giving her a total of six, and was in the process of interviewing girls to fill the new openings and to run the new tanning bed. When Voncille named her business "The Pretty Parlor," she felt that she promised her clients two things. She promised to make them pretty which, of course, was not always possible, but she could honestly say that a customer had never walked out her door that didn't look better than she had looked when she came in, except for the time the new girl, Joy, got the perm solution too strong and melted Mrs. Enfinger's ends. The other promise

was implied in the word “parlor.” She tried to make her clients comfortable, the way she would guests in her home. She offered refreshments from the vending machines to her regulars, and sometimes even brought in homemade treats for them to enjoy. That is, if she could make candy without Victor smelling it and eating it up. Victor never came to the Pretty Parlor. She wished sometimes that he could see her at work, could see what she did all day. He liked to take her by houses whose drains he’d snaked and tell her what all came out of people’s pipes, and how just any plumber couldn’t have cleaned out such a problem drain without ruining the pipes, but she never got to show him a hairdo she’d done before it’d been slept on.

By the time she got Edith taken care of and went back to finish Lucille’s perm, Voncille was relieved to find that Lucille was flipping through a *Ladies Home Journal* and Betty was telling Dora about how big her periwinkles had gotten since she put Peter Grow on them. She said she hadn’t known what else to do with them after Carlton threw out her Windowbox Bible as sacrilege.

Voncille thought about her marriage to Victor and was glad that he didn’t throw her books out. She didn’t think she could live with a man who did. As a matter of fact, Victor didn’t even know what she read. She had tried to tell him the story of *The Thornbirds*, but he’d said he’d wait for the miniseries to come around again.

Dora asked if Carlton made a habit of throwing Betty’s books out, and Betty said “not really” but that he threatened to throw

out her new microwave dessert book if she didn’t tear out the page with the Sinful Fudge recipe on it—but that she’d outfoxed him and crossed out the word “sinful” and written in “redeemed” over it, so Carlton let it stay, even ate some of it.

Voncille realized that Victor didn’t even know the names of any of her recipes. If he so much as went near a cookbook, she’d faint on the floor. All he knew about meal time was that he got hungry and she fed him, no matter how much her feet hurt from rolling hair all day. For all he ever asked or said, she could be the girl behind the counter at the K-mart deli.

Voncille heard Edith’s buzzer go off and Lucille say “maybe that’s what Harry was gettin’ down at the deli—sinful fudge.” Then Lucille added real seriously, “but I think it was the goulash, Hungarian goulash. He never even told me he wanted goulash. I could’ve fixed it.”

Voncille felt sick, like she might cry or faint or throw up or something. She pumped Lucille down in the chair and automatically handed her a Sprite and some Malt-o’s as she guided her to a dryer. Then she yelled to Dora, “I’m taking five—keep an eye on the desk.”

She’d already gotten Victor on the phone when Dora got around to sighing “Awright,” as if she’d been asked to fight off the entire Palestinian Liberation Organization single-handed, and Edith called, “Voncille, I’m done.”

Voncille ignored them both as she asked Victor his feelings on Hungarian Goulash for supper that night.



Illustration by Mike Reece

# THE DOWNSIDE RISK

by David Wimberley

*Are you bored? Short on cash? Take the downside risk, and you'll solve at least one of your problems. Here are the stories of three who did.*

**K**evin Stipe, a senior in economics from Chicago, began wheeling and dealing when he first came to Auburn in 1983. When Stipe saw high-quality blank cassette tapes selling for up to \$5.00 here, he was shocked, and began ordering TDK's from Chicago, where they sold for \$1.99. "I sold probably eighty tapes for three dollars each," he said. "But what was funny was that my roommate sold practically all of them. Every day he would come in with friends that wanted tapes." The venture left Stipe considerably fatter in the wallet and helped struggling students save precious dollars on cassettes.

Indeed, Stipe is like all good capitalists—he provides a service which exploits the market. Last Christmas his sister sent him a check for a Trivial Pursuit game, but that didn't help him much—Trivial Pursuit games were in high demand and not to be found anywhere. Stipe realized the implications, so when he received a hot tip that Toys R Us in Montgomery had a new shipment of Trivial Pursuit, he drove to Montgomery, bought himself a game, then invested in eight extras. Back in Auburn he jacked the price from \$26.00 to \$35.00 and unloaded them all in one day. Sales being what they were, he returned to restock. "I think I ended up buying about twenty more games. They wouldn't let me buy that many at once, so I took a bunch of people and we all went through the line." He sold many of these last games to friends in Chicago via U.S. Mail.

Last year came Stipe's most famous, if least successful, effort. As a member of a student senate subcommittee complaining about burgeoning tuition, he heard Tuition-Buster T-shirts suggested in jest. Taken with the idea and acting on his own, he oversaw the process from conception of a logo to the final production of 150 t-shirts. Every one sold for \$6.00 each within two days on the concourse.

As with the Trivial Pursuit games, Stipe went back for more—200 more, this time.

"The \$800 investment scared me, but since I figured any t-shirt would sell for \$3.00 on the concourse, I put the true downside risk at only a hundred bucks." The second run of shirts arrived right before fall finals. He didn't find time to peddle the shirts before the holidays, and temperatures were too cold to sell t-shirts once winter quarter began. At this writing, he still has \$800 worth of t-shirts. He furnished a free tip: "Never underestimate your downside risk."

**L**loyd Townsend graduated from Auburn in 1977 with a B.S. in geology. After graduation Townsend worked at the University Extension Service until his record label, Imaginary Records, was born. How did he come up with the name? "Well, it seemed appropriate," he joked. "Unfortunately it still seems that way."

But he doesn't mean it. "Since 1981 I've been working on recording projects and setting up a distribution service for my own label and about three dozen other independent labels." The first album on the Imaginary label was *Serve and Protect* by The Moderns, a college band that played the Auburn area during late 1981 and 1982. "*Serve and Protect* got college station airplay around the country and in Canada," Townsend explained, "but the exposure was too scattered to raise any sort of demand for national distribution." Local sales totaled only about 350 albums out of 800. "Which isn't bad. That's not breaking even, but it's not an utter disaster, either."

The Moderns followed *Serve and Protect* with a three-song cassette entitled *Jagged Edges*, which got zero airplay because WEGL had no cassette deck at the time. "*Jagged Edges* was more experiment than anything," Townsend said, "just to see if anyone remembered The Moderns. They still might cut another album, but that will be later." The Moderns will be included on an Imaginary Records compilation album along with several other local bands: Mr. Resistor, Kidd Blue, The Bonnevilles,

Slow Natives, and Nothing Personal. The album is tentatively scheduled for release January or February of 1987.

Townsend's penchant for science fiction conventions has led to an unusual opportunity for Imaginary Records. At the 1983 Chatacon festival in Chattanooga, Tennessee, he met Somtow Sucharitkul, author of *Mallworld*. Sucharitkul, also a composer and conductor, later hooked Townsend up with a 1978 live recording of Sucharitkul's "Hexaphony," performed at the Cultural Center of the Philippines in Manila. Townsend describes "Hexaphony" as an "avant-garde improvisational piece, basically a fusion of Eastern and Western classical styles." "Hexaphony" has been aired over the Japanese Public Network, and Townsend hopes to break it in on PBS before its release on the Imaginary label.

**F**reshman Alan Mann came to Auburn Fall quarter with an established video enterprise. Using a battery powered Magnavox VCR camera, Mann films. That's right—he films. "You name it, I'll film it," he said. "My mother and I came up with the idea when we went to a wedding and saw this guy in the back filming it." First stop for Mann was First Alabama Bank to meet the loan officer. His mother put him in business by cosigning an equipment loan of \$2,000.

"I've filmed a lot of things," Mann said, "weddings, YMCA sports, high school basketball, graduations, parties . . . Weddings during the summer was one of the biggest things. I made up the \$2,000 within the first year." He charges \$100 for a wedding tape, which includes "the actual wedding plus the reception and all the little things people usually take snapshots of, like napkins, rice-throwing, the bride getting dressed—well, not actually getting dressed. You know what I'm talking about." The other services are based on a set fee of \$50 per hour.

# INTERVIEW: NANCY LEWIS

by Melissa Dickson

*ARTISTIC INTEGRITY,  
FLUID LINE, SUBTLE IMAGERY...*





...these phrases are the heart of the visually expressive world of Nancy Lewis, a senior majoring in illustration at Auburn. Before coming to Auburn, Lewis graduated from the Art Institute of Atlanta where she received an Associate's of Fine Arts Degree in fashion illustration. Her interest in art developed at an early age. With the influence and support of her priest Bill McLemore, a cartoonist, her parents were at length convinced to allow a formal art education at the Alabama School of Fine Arts in Birmingham. She also participated in the University of Chicago Art Independent Study program as a high school student. After receiving her Bachelor's Degree from Auburn this spring, Lewis hopes to find employment in Atlanta, applying her skills in illustration and design.

Lewis says she chose illustration merely to avoid the stigma of the "starving artist." She expects her illustrations to be perfect and considers them a challenge, almost a labor. Illustration demands the use of universally recognizable symbols which coherently communicate ideas in a realistic manner. The subject is of primary importance. Depiction must usually be detached and impersonal. According to Lewis, illustration lacks the honesty and emotion she conveys in her paintings, which use subject matter merely as a "vehicle for the medium."

Lewis' primary interest is her oil paintings. Pure and soulful, they are the very essence of Nancy Lewis. For her, painting is a therapeutic experience in which all frustration and emotion can be expressed in

line, form and color. "The messages that I try to send," Lewis comments, "are sometimes almost too complex for even me to understand because my paintings. . .they're like therapy . . .I just start painting and something happens."

Because her personal art is so pure and uncontaminated, it reflects Lewis' own emotional self and does not represent visual reality. "My art comes from within me. . .The things that I'm most proud of are not pictures of things that I see or people that actually exist. Most of my art is full of all kinds of subtle messages that come from within myself that kind of spill out of me onto my canvas. That's honesty, that's integrity to me. That's how I want people to see it. Take it for what it is — just a part of me."



# WILL THE IRON BOWL RUST?

by Avivi Osborne

**N**ow that the controversial gubernatorial race has finally, thankfully come to a close, Alabamians can again concentrate on and debate the really important things in life—like what is going to happen to the Auburn-Alabama football game when the contract to play at Legion Field expires in 1987.

Although 1987 is the last year the game is under contract to be played at Legion Field, the series is scheduled through 1991. This is where the controversy begins. The 1986 Auburn football media guide lists the site of the '88 and '89 games as "To Be Announced." The 1986 Alabama football media guide lists the site of the games as Birmingham. Most Auburn fans would prefer that "TBA" be replaced with Auburn. Most Alabama fans want to stay at Legion Field where the game has been played for the last 38 years.

Auburn and Alabama alternate years as the home team. Besides determining on which side of the field the teams will stand and on which side of the stands the fans will sit, "home team" indicates which team is in charge of the pressbox, statistics, and programs. And as far as Auburn people are concerned, "home team" should include the privilege of determining where the game will be played.

The issue is two-sided: why isn't Alabama willing to play in Auburn? and, why doesn't Auburn want to keep the series in Birmingham?

As with everything involving Auburn and Alabama, the fans quickly choose sides and start fighting. And though most fans are true to their team on the issue, a few rebels from each team hold different views.

#### *Views from Alabama fans:*

"Birmingham is centrally located for everyone. There is no reason to play the game anywhere else."

"There is too much tradition in this game to move it every other year. The teams, the time and the place are all equally part of the tradition."

"Let's play in Auburn. Nothing would make me happier than to beat Auburn in Jordan-Hare Stadium."

#### *Views from Auburn fans:*

"There is no good reason Alabama should not be willing to come to Auburn. But I'm not sure what would happen to our campus if they did."

"It's not worth the hassle. Keep it in Birmingham."

"Legion Field is not neutral. The crowd was at least 60-40 their way last year, and they play on that field at least half the season."

#### *Views from Auburn and Alabama:*

"It doesn't matter what the students, coaches or administration want. Both Auburn and Alabama have too many alumni in Birmingham. The alumni will keep the game there."

Of the many different opinions that have been expressed, it is the question of the neutrality of Legion Field that is the major concern of Auburn fans. Auburn supporters were dismayed last year at the visible majority of Alabama fans at the Iron Bowl. But according to Auburn assistant ticket manager Marty McGinty, the tickets are split 50-50 between Auburn and Alabama.

"We are allotted the same number of tickets to sell every year, and our tickets are sold to Auburn people," says McGinty. "People sell their tickets because of the hassle of parking and getting to the stadium, and because Legion Field is in a bad part of town."

In the Alabama media guide, Legion Field is listed as an Alabama home playing field along with Bryant-Denny Stadium in Tuscaloosa, both of which are Astroturf. The Iron Bowl this year marked Alabama's fourth game at Legion Field this season and at least their ninth on turf. It was Auburn's only game at Legion Field and their third on turf.

Whatever happens, both Auburn and Alabama want to claim victory. In the end however, this entire episode could become (or already has) a ridiculous situation. Leave the strategy and tackling to the players. It would be a shame for the series to end over such a trivial matter. In that case, then the governor's race and the Auburn/Alabama controversy have a lot in common...nobody wins.

## I REMEMBER THE BAND PLAYING

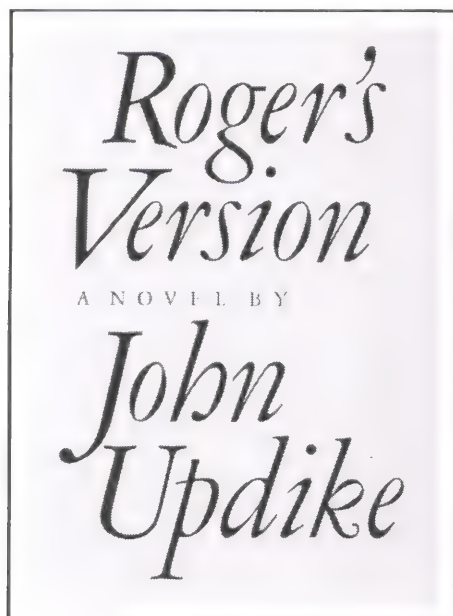
I remember the band playing  
I remember the floor tilting, pushing me against friends  
along the wall.  
I would stare at them, talk, and they would change to  
someone else as I watched.  
With a moan the floor would tilt up and many others and  
I would be in a large tight group dancing  
to music with an uneven rhythm.  
Standing in the entry holding the wall back  
standing with others who think they are invisible  
too, while time drips in a sticky stream almost  
stopping.  
One knows I would be sick if it did.  
Sunglasses and a ringing in my ear give me the next day  
and a dread of seeing the disappearing people.

— Jeffrey Owens

# BOOK REVIEW

by Theresa Rudy

## ROGER'S VERSION



John Updike's latest novel, *Roger's Version*, uses gritty realism to make evident the hypocrisies of today's society. The version is Roger Lambert's, a disillusioned former Methodist minister teaching at the Divinity School of the local university. Lambert's dull, routine life is abruptly interrupted when a young grad student, Dale Kohler, introduces himself to Lambert's secretary as a friend of the professor's runaway niece, Verna. Intrigued, Lambert agrees to see his visitor. Kohler wants help in attaining a university grant for a study which he believes will prove the existence of God via scientific and computer technology. Although he dislikes both the proposal and the young man, Lambert sees a challenge and sets out to disabuse the student of his beliefs. In doing so, he must also reassess his own views.

Dale's persistent visits to the professor's office also lead Lambert to check up on his niece. Nineteen-year-old Verna and her illegitimate mulatto child entangle Lambert in their problematic lives as well. The book examines the various relationships over a six month period. The reader is drawn into Lambert's own cooling family life, as well as those of Verna and Dale. An almost storybook ending resolves some conflicts while leaving others to the reader's discretion.

Despite the theological nature of the plot, *Roger's Version* is far from being a novel-long sermon. It is fast-paced and well-written. However, the discussions of Tertullian and computer intelligence become tedious unless you are an erudite scholar who understands both Latin and FORTRAN. I also found the narration slightly confusing. Lambert narrates the story from a first person point of view. His descriptions become more and more omniscient, however, until it becomes increasingly hard to distinguish whether events are actually taking place or are just figments of Lambert's vivid imagination.

Even so, I found *Roger's Version* to be interesting and enlightening. Updike uses stereotypical characters—the stuffy professor, the bored wife, the unwed mother—and makes them more than just statistics. The casualness with which Updike, through Lambert, addresses prejudice, infidelity, and growing disillusionment with religion

becomes frightening as one realizes how truly typical and accepted these things are in our present society. The setting of the book is not one of a future era; it is today. Cyndi Lauper's "She Bop" blares from the radio in Verna's housing project apartment, and the favorite topic of discussion at a party is Reagan's mistakes in office. Lambert lives in middle class suburbia and knows that the family next door leads a happier life than his own. The world of *Roger's Version* is as familiar as your own backyard. It is in this world, our world, that Verna must deal with the prejudice of her parents, the black men of the housing project, and that which is hidden in her own heart. Lambert's family is normal by today's standards, yet his wife is committing adultery. Updike uses these characters and situations to make us take a long hard look at our own lives. How close a relationship is there? Updike leaves the answer up to the reader.

## WHO'S READING WHAT ON THE AUBURN CAMPUS?

by Kelly Caldwell

### President Martin—

*Mismanagement in Higher Education: A Case Study* by Charles Mercieca

*Due South* edited by R. T. Smith and Nadya Belins

*Oral Roberts: An American Life* by David Edwin Harrell, Jr.

### Evelyn Jordan—Panhellenic Advisor

*Lake Woebegone Days* by Garrison Keilor

*People of the Lie* by M. Scott Peck

*Lonesome Dove* by Larry McMurtly

*Bus to Paradise—A Loving Voyage* by Leo Buscoglie

### Chris Roush—Editor of The Auburn Plainsman

*Fear and Loathing on the Campaign Trail 1972* by Hunter S. Thompson.

### Michelle Malach—General Manager WEGE

*The Decatur Road* by Joe Coombs

*The Children of Violence* series by Doris Lessing

### Pat Dye—

*The Art of War* by Sun Tzu

### Carolyn Draughon—Former First Lady of Auburn University

*Cold, Sassy Tree* by Olive Ann Burns

### Robert Maund—President SGA

*Iacocca* by Lee Iacocca

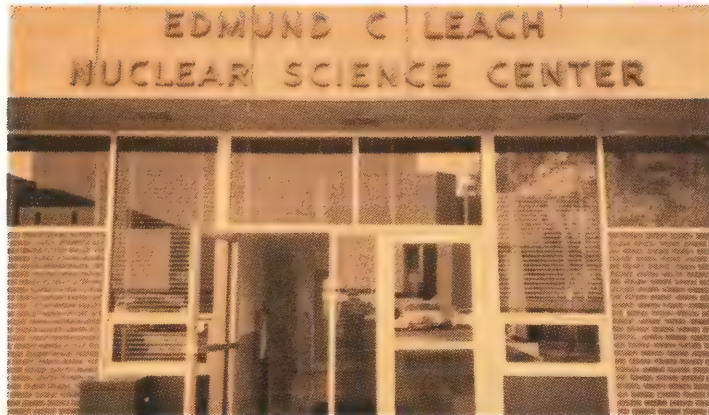
### Shelly Murphy—Auburn Homecoming Queen 1986

*The Friendship Factor* by Allen Loy McGinnis

*Color Me Beautiful* by Carole Jackson

# NUCLEAR MATERIALS ON CAMPUS: ARE WE SAFE?

by Ken Boyte



In the aftermath of the nuclear accident at Chernobyl, and more than seven years since the near-meltdown at our own country's Three Mile Island nuclear site, people worry about nuclear accidents.

Even on the campus of Auburn University, concerned people gossip and spread rumors about the possibility of a radiation accident occurring at the Leach Nuclear Science Center where potentially-fatal Cobalt 60 is kept to treat sick animals.

"There has never been a reported radiation accident on campus since radioactive materials were first used here in the early 1900s," said Assistant Radiological Safety Officer John King. He explained that it is not possible for a meltdown to occur on the Plains because there is not a nuclear reactor here. In fact, one is 40 times more likely to be struck by lightning than to die from radiation exposure, according to the latest report of U.S. Vital Statistics. The government-issued document lists 87 people killed in 1981 by lightning, 2,068 people killed in 1981 by choking on food and 2 people killed in 1981 by unspecified radiation.

Cobalt 60, potentially the most dangerous radioactive material on campus, is kept exclusively at the Nuclear Science building. In one form, shaped much like an eight-inch ruler, Cobalt 60 is used in research. For example, it has been used in exper-

iments on campus to sterilize chicken feed, Dr. Ray Cooper of the Physics department said. A study was done on chicken diseases, and researchers did not want germs to enter the chickens via food; thus, the food was sterilized.

The other form of Cobalt 60 is used by the School of Veterinary Medicine in cancer treatment of sick animals, and it is only one of many radioactive substances that are used in 67 laboratories on campus, King continued.

"The radioactive materials are all over campus," King said. Among the buildings that contain other radioactive materials are the College of Veterinary Medicine, Saunders Hall (the chemistry building), Allison Lab (the physics building), Rose Hall (the chemistry laboratories), the pharmacy building, Funchess Hall (pesticide research), the Animal Dairy Science building, Spidel Hall (the home economics department), White-Smith Hall (the forestry building) and Swingle Hall (the fisheries department).

Besides Cobalt 60, other radioactive materials used on campus include Carbon 14, which is used at Funchess Hall to help plants grow; Iodine 125, which is used at the College of Veterinary Medicine to locate blockages in sick animals' blood vessels; and Hydrogen 3, which is also used at Funchess Hall as a plant nutrient.

These radioactive substances are safe to

the workers who use them, as well as to students and faculty members who may come into contact with them because people are not exposed to a large enough dose of radiation and because people are not exposed long enough to the substances to be harmed, King said.

King points to the nuclear power industry's good track record, and he wonders why people are so afraid of nuclear energy. He says that people frequently die while working in coal mines or on hydroelectric dams, but not much is said about the deaths. Although relatively few deaths are connected with nuclear energy projects, King said, these deaths are largely publicized. But accidents in a coal mine imperil only the miners and rescue workers, while a nuclear mishap threatens countless people.

King continued to explain that the strict regulations of the industry and the safety precautions employed within the industry account for nuclear power's good performance. For example, at Auburn, Cobalt 60 is kept in a concrete vault underneath the Nuclear Science Center. The walls to the vault are at least three feet thick, and thicker in places. A bright panel of buttons that control safety locks glow on the wall outside the door. Another panel of buttons that control other safety locks to the vault, blink across the hall. Only one person, Nuclear Science Specialist Richard Knight,

has keys to open it.

Inside the vault, the Cobalt 60 is submerged in 12 feet of water that serves as an extra shield. Not even an earthquake could cause a radiation leak, Dr. Ray Cooper of the physics department said.

Even if, by some freak accident, the door to the vault were to be left open and someone wandered into the room, the person would not be in any danger because the Cobalt 60 is shielded by the water, King said. One would have to raise the Cobalt 60 out of the pool and be exposed to it for 10 minutes to receive a lethal dose, King said. It would almost be impossible for this scenario to occur, he continued. "Working with Cobalt 60 is no more dangerous than having an X-ray taken," Dr. Bill Brawner of the Vet School said, if safety precautions are followed.

No one has ever been treated at the Drake Student Health Center for radiation exposure, Acting-Director Dr. Dunlap Oleson said, though in the past student workers accidentally over-exposed patients with X-rays, a practice that King said has ceased.

The people who work with radiation on campus, such as King, however, have a greater chance of being exposed and hurt by radiation. But he puts his job in perspective: "It's like working with electricity. If you are an electrician, you know that there is a chance of being killed by electrocution, but the risks are minimal. I never worry about it."

People who work with radioactive materials at Auburn are not required by state law to be monitored for possible radiation contamination, though King said tests will be administered at the university's expense to anyone wanting them.

The people who use the Cobalt 60 pool are never exposed to the radiation, Brawner said. The animals that are treated are first tranquilized, then placed on a table inside the vault. The people leave the room and the doors are locked. Electronically, a type of "gun" is aimed at the animal. A beam of Cobalt 60 is passed through the animal for several seconds, then shut off. The Cobalt 60 is lowered back into the pool, and the safety procedures are reversed. Since people are separated from the Cobalt 60 by concrete and lead, it is not possible for anyone to get hurt, he continued.

Cobalt 60 therapy at Auburn has helped many animals. There have been "famous" patients here, too. In September, 1970, one

— Continued on next page

# NUCLEAR TOMB

by Ken Boyte



Tombstones and flowers don't mark the "graves." No one goes there to mourn on Sundays, but every six months an inspection team stops by to test the soil for radiation leaks. What's buried in the back part of a field behind the Veterinary School isn't exactly human.

"Resting in peace" under 11 feet of sand and clay—seven feet deeper than required by state law—are iron barrels that contain solid waste contaminated by radioactive materials used in campus laboratories, former Director of the Leach Nuclear Science Center Raymond Askew said. He called the site "safe" in a recent interview. The last state inspection called for a fence to be erected around the site, but no fence has been put up yet.

The radioactive specters that haunt the buried materials within the area are Cobalt 60, Carbon 14, and Hydrogen 3.

These tainted substances were "laid to rest" in 14 burials between early 1971 and June 1982, Assistant Radiological Safety Officer John King said. "We needed the burial site in a time frame when no other alternative was available to us," Askew said. Some of the contaminated laboratory waste includes carcasses of mice, syringes and paper.

The university doesn't bury waste any more because incinerating it is safer and

cheaper, Askew said. Ashes of paper and carcasses that contain radiation take up less space, and the condensed volumes of waste are safer to handle because of their smaller size. The "burned" radioactive materials could be transferred to US Government storage facilities in small towns in Washington and South Carolina, he said.

Also, burning the radioactive waste under proper conditions isn't dangerous, he said. Proper conditions include enough wind to disburse the gases and the absence of rain, which would trap the gases at a low atmospheric level. The gases include carbon monoxide, potentially lethal if breathed in large amounts.

Though the incineration process may be cheaper, the "graveyard" isn't dangerous, he said. "There is no reasonable way a person can get to the waste unless they go to the site with a backhoe and dig it up," Askew said. "There is not enough there to create a health hazard even if it was dug up and spread around," he continued. "And if the waste was dug up, one wouldn't get sick or die from exposure unless one swallowed the stuff," he said.

An earthquake splitting the site and ripping apart the barrels, flinging the radioactive waste into someone's face wouldn't be harmful if the person hit did not swallow it, due to the low concentrations, Askew said. Even breathing it would not be dangerous, he said.

The barrels are strong, he said. They are not expected to deteriorate for 1,500 years. Besides the strength of their alloy, the drum's life in Auburn is aided by low levels of acidity in the soil, Askew explained. There isn't enough acid in the ground there to eat through the barrels, he said. The plot of land on the Plains was also chosen because water tables here are deep enough to be safe from possible leaks, Askew said.

To further the safety of the site, he expects the barrels will be dug up for inspection in about 10 years. Since the incineration process is cheaper, the barrels won't be buried again, he said.

of the nation's leading breeding horses, Bold Ruler, was treated for cancer of the throat. The therapy extended the horse's life for a year, allowing the animal to perform additional stud service. Among the offspring of the horse, which is partially owned by an Auburn alumnus, is the Triple Crown winner *Secretariat*, Dr. H.C. Morgan of the Vet School said.

Another notable patient is Hush Puppie's TV commercial star "Bassil" the basset hound, said Brawner. About sixty not-so-prestigious pets, such as dogs and cats, are also treated with the therapy annually.

Besides Auburn University, the nearest colleges that store Cobalt 60 are the University of Tennessee and Texas A&M, said Brawner. "Cobalt 60 is a big plus for Auburn," he added.

The Radiology Department of the East Alabama Medical Center also uses Cobalt 60. As with its use on Auburn University's campus, the Cobalt 60 is not buried or otherwise disposed of on the premises, said Beverly Long, a radiation therapist for the hospital. The Cobalt 60 at the hospital is stored in lead casing, called a "lead pig," within a machine that is used for therapy; the nuclear Science building also houses such a machine. Thus, there are two sources of Cobalt 60 used on campus: the Cobalt pool and the therapy unit.

The manufacturer of the Cobalt 60 delivers the product to both facilities. It is transported encased in a thick lead box, King said. The Cobalt 60 wouldn't be dangerous if the truck carrying it wrecked and the radioactive materials fell onto the street, as long as it remained encased in the protective lead box, he continued. The manufacturer also removes the "used" material and takes it back to the plant for disposal, Long and King said, adding that it has never been buried in Auburn.

The material loses 50 percent of its radioactivity in 5.2 years, but it still remains dangerous. It is stored by the manufacturer in a warehouse until it has lost all of its radioactivity in 126.5 years, King said.

Is there danger of radioactive materials on campus getting into the environment and hurting the unsuspecting? Brawner says no. A strange-looking mound of dirt lying between Sewell Hall and the Nuclear Science Center is used to shield radiation created in an experimental lab below. But even that's not dangerous, said Raymond Askew, the center's director. "We've never lost a football player yet, and they've been out there sunbathing for 20 years."

## PHOTOGRAPH OF MY DECEMBER BIRTHDAY 1969

Daddy

In the picture

You stand in your quiet black shadow

Left arm dangling like a deadened nerve

Right arm stretched stiffly to your side

A hand reaching my bud-green shoulder

Fingers spread like the wings of a luna moth

Light cuts your hat brim black across your eyes

And frames the curve of your crescent smile

That was then too far in the night

To see or feel

Away from you and in the sun

I stand biting my smile

My fingers clasped white

My arms crossed in front of me

Pulling myself far away from your shadow

Into the heat of my fifth winter

Into the heat of pink candles

Fingers pointing towards tomorrow

The grass colored coat I wore

The virgin wool faded

My skin darkened ripe

Seams split at the shoulders

And the cocoon was shed for scavengers

Leaving dust

Daddy

As I hold us both in my hand

I see more fire this December

But feel the shade fall

Our faces fade on leaf-dry paper

Blown in by a sighing wind

Caught by my fingers

Spread like the wings of a luna moth.

— Blair Hobbs



# THE VISION

by Marjorie Milsted

“Honorable, beautiful Guanyin Buddha, smooth and soft is your stone and white as milk. I once was strong and young like you. I marched straight and proud as you stand now, and Tau Hao, I remember that her hair flowed as a river like yours—but only for me when we were newly married. I was young then and did not know the lonely journey that I would march...”

As Chin Fu Sheng bowed before Guanyin Buddha, a delicate stone figurine, a rhythmic sound on the cobblestone path outside interrupted his meditation. He looked to the statue maiden who held in one hand a slender vase with a willow bough and in the other a strand of beads. Her white figure glowed in the sunlight pouring from the window above the small table on which she stood. He had not moved her since he had arrived thirty years

ago. He had placed a mirror beside her to reflect the sun as it moved during the day so that she would be in sunlight as long as possible. In China he had found her in a shop window where she had stood amongst others like her before shoppers and the sun all day.

Emerging only partially into the daylight, Fu moved to the doorway of his hut to see the cause of the disturbance. From where he stood on the threshold, it would not be apparent to an onlooker that there was a house there at all, since the hut was built into the side of the hill whose sole purpose it seemed was to be an imposing mountain of ivy. The door and two windows gave the hill the uncanny aspect of peering circumspectly through a headdress of foliage into a furtive world.

Standing down below by the pond was a child with long golden blonde hair. Her petite frame and pale skin made her look frail and younger than her years. Yet she was exuberant. She wore a white dress that billowed out to the reach of her fingertips because of the uncomfortable petticoat that some unkind nurse had commanded her to wear. On her feet were white slippers stained with green from having strayed from the cobblestone path to the freedom of the damp carpet of grass. In her left hand were thick, long, green strands of tiger lilies which she waved to the swans, who startled by her approach, had taken refuge at the farthest perimeter of the pond. In her right hand were reins to a small white pony of an indefinite age, who knew itself to be in the precarious hands of a whimsical young miss. The brightness of the summer sun illuminated the young girl and her pony, making them white cutouts cast against a vast blue horizon. It was as if she and her companion were part of the sky and clouds reflected in the pond before which they stood.

"Guanyin Buddha, you are here—an answer to my prayers," uttered the old Chinese gardener softly to himself as he stood mesmerized by the vision before him. Never since leaving the province of Shandong had he seen such a vision, and then it had been when the mountain appeared as if it were in bloom from all the peach trees in blossom. The white flowers would drop into the river, and as if by magic, float down to the field where he, a poor farmer, worked long hours to feed his young son. He would carefully coax flowers from the stream and bring them to Tau Hao, his wife, whose name was that of the peach flower.

On the day that he had said goodbye to Tau Hao and his son, the day that he had left them to join the army, he had brought his young wife blossoms from the river. After he had wrapped Guanyin Buddha safely in a piece of cloth and tucked her in his pocket, he had left Tau Hao holding the delicate blossoms that had already begun to lose their freshness.

The years that had followed had been ones without visions, love or happiness. As a soldier he fought, seeing only death, feeling only fatigue and pain. The time had come when he had needed to leave China. He had gone to Taiwan with many other soldiers. There, they had found little refuge in the already poor, overcrowded country. Fu had been unable to find a place to sleep and work to earn money to buy food. One day he had seen a wealthy family struggling with their many goods and had offered to help them. In return they had given him some food and afterwards had asked him to come to America with them as their servant. He had accepted because he could not return to the river that flowed with peach blossoms. Since he could neither write nor read, he had been unable to let Tau Hao and his son know that he was alive and going to America.

Once they had arrived in California, Fu's employer had lost his money quickly and had told Fu that he must leave. Fu had wrestled with hunger and the difficulty of asking for work in a language no one understood, until one day another Chinese who could speak English told him of a banker in the Carmel Valley who needed help on his estate.

Fu, even after the many hardships, and in his forties, still appeared strong and determined; and his black eyes seemed kind. He had been hired to cart things in a wheelbarrow, to sweep, and to keep the grass from overtaking the infrequently used paths in the gardens. Fu did not care that his services were so limited, for he was given a modest home of his own where no one disturbed him, and he was content. As the years passed, he became a part of the estate. Once he had understood his duties, no one talked to him and he in turn never spoke to anyone. As one supervisor replaced another, each one initially harrassed Fu, but then left him alone after they observed that he would answer their jests by bowing and smiling.

So he lived in the silent world of memories and waited to die. But when he turned seventy, he began to grow impatient and prayed to Guanyin Buddha continuously to silence the memories of blood and death that persisted, haunting him. Sometimes he would wake in the night because he had dreamed that the skies rained blood and each raindrop hit him like the bullets that had pierced his body long ago. Guanyin Buddha sat quietly in the golden light of day listening patiently to his pleas.

He had made a promise to her when he left Taiwan, that after the many years he had traveled with her as a soldier there would be a time when she would not have to move again. And he could tell now that she was well pleased. During the years in the Carmel Valley, her milk-white stone had become clearer, almost translucent so that the robe that flowed to her feet seemed a source of light. He even imagined in the night that she was glowing, speaking to him that good things were yet to come.

The sound of the pony's hooves clacking on the cobblestones awoke Fu from his reverie, and all that he saw when he looked up was a miniature of the child as she moved down the winding path with her pony back to the manor home. She had not seen the old Chinese man dressed in the plain gray pants and jacket standing in the doorway of the ivy hut. She had not seen the memories cross his face, nor the happiness that she had brought him. She in her youth was too much a part of nature to know anything about despair, loneliness and death. Had she looked up the path by the pond to the ivy hut perhaps she would not even have seen him as he blended in with his odd small home hidden in the large garden.

That night he prepared his simple meal of noodles and soup. As he cupped the bowl close to his mouth, he saw over the rim Guanyin Buddha staring at him. He wondered what she had sent in the form of the young beautiful girl and her pony, if she had finally answered his prayer to leave this world where he had experienced so much pain and suffered so many passions. He stood in front of her before he went to bed, bowing and praying for an explanation of the vision he had seen that day.

As he lay in bed the moon filtered through the window creating a halo around Guanyin Buddha, and Fu longed for her answer to come to him in a dream. But he could not sleep and after several hours he moved to the doorway and looked down on the pond. There at the edge of the water, the swans, huddled ghostly forms in the starlight, cooed, and the moon beams that stroked Guanyin Buddha indoors, cast an army of tall, thin soldiers dressed

in silver across the surface of the pond. Fu could not see their faces as they marched away from him. He moved down the path to join them in their march. The swans, awakened from their midnight nesting, scurried into the water and broke the image. As he stood there, the soldiers disappeared, and he saw his old face ripple into wrinkles of despondancy. He returned to bed, avoiding Guanyin Buddha's stare.

Several weeks went by, and he did not see the blonde-haired child again. The days numbered and he could not sleep, nor eat. Soon, he found that he had difficulty lifting the handles of the wheelbarrow and that bending over to pick up the pine straw and leaves hurt his back more than the usual discomfort of old age.

On the first day of the fourth week, he did not get out of bed. He did not look to Buddha for strength; he had found that after the child's visit he could no longer remember the words he had uttered to her during the years when he as a soldier had kept her in his pocket and touched her when no one else knew that he was afraid or lonely. Only she for forty years had known his thoughts and the yearnings of his heart. But now he found that he could no longer look to her for solace; his old body ached and his eyes hurt to look at her in the sunlight.

As he lay in bed, he heard the sound of the pony's hooves and the voice of a young child urging it down the cobblestone path. Summoning all his strength, he rose from the bed, put on a cap to protect his weary eyes and looked out the doorway.

The small girl dressed in the same outfit as before stood by the pond casting pieces of bread to the swans that swirled close by. Fu moved down the incline slowly to where she stood, and when she saw him, she was not afraid. She had never seen a man all in gray before who moved agilely as some soft creature of the wood. She had never seen someone with eyes that were narrow and black. The strange man beckoned to her, but she refused to go to him.

Fu, seeing her reluctance, motioned for her to stay where she was. He returned to his hut as quickly as he could. His legs were weak and trembled as he moved to the table where Guanyin Buddha looked to him questioningly from her throne in the sun. Dust motes streamed across her, and he reached through the beams to pick her up.

He moved steadily toward the vision by the lake. He longed to see the small, imperfect statue melt like ice before the real Guanyin Buddha. She had come with her pony to get him. He spoke to the child in words that she did not understand, and he carried an unusual object with him that he handed to her. For a few minutes the girl was fascinated with the stone figurine. It was cold, yet soft to her fingers. It was lovely. The eyes of the statue were like the eyes of the old man who watched her closely. She looked to the little gray man and back to the figurine; they both stared at her as if she were expected to do something. Frightened, she dropped the figure, turned and fled, startling her pony who had been savoring the grass by the pond by jerking his reins and dragging him behind her.

Fu stopped to pick up Guanyin Buddha from the ground. His back troubled him, but he was able to stand. He cleaned the rich black earth from her face and robe, begging forgiveness for having moved her from her home by the window. For a moment, though, he had thought that she lived and had come to take him away from the world of desire to a place where the peach blossoms did not fall from the branch and did not bear fruit, yet offered a sweet fragrance and beauty for eternity.

He ambled back to his narrow bed in the ivy hut. The next day the supervisor, realizing that he had not seen Fu for two days, went to the Chinaman's hovel and found the door open. The hut was empty, the bed made, and the dishes stacked neatly by the sink. The floor looked as though it had been swept that morning. But Fu was not to be seen.

It was not until later that afternoon that Fu was found slumped against a tree close to the manor home. He had not wandered too far from the cobblestone path that the blonde child had taken in her flight the day before. Beside him were several over-ripe peaches. Apparently, the supervisor surmised, Fu had gone to collect the fallen fruit when his heart had bothered him, he had sat down to rest and never awakened.

No one would ever know that the night after seeing the girl child that he had finally had a vision. Guanyin Buddha had come to him dressed in a robe of moonlight. She had ridden across the pond on a swan, lifted Fu from his bed, and carried him away in the light. All he had felt was a deep rich coolness and then a peace where there was no more light and no more darkness.

The mortician discovered in Fu's pocket a small white statue of an oriental woman. Finding it interesting, he kept the statue for himself and later placed it in a dark corner of one of the mourning rooms where no one ever noticed her.

## AIR

### I. Laced to the essence of molecules is space:

bonds arch nothing with the nothing  
fire of the universe:

energy; recompelling particles to collide  
with physics,

it holds both together and apart:  
vital wedge,

synapse snap of creation.

Built on the yes and no  
of matter,

the everything of everyone stands on  
next to nothing:

without the breathing space of atoms  
worlds implode.

### II. The subtle weaving of water embraces air

in every identical bounce over stone,  
wave fraying into sand,

stormy fall lumbering over cliff  
to its life,

original oxygen mixer.

Airless water  
is arid as waterless earth:

in the depths,  
ugly gulpers suck much and  
move slow.

But water breathing leaps  
in fish,

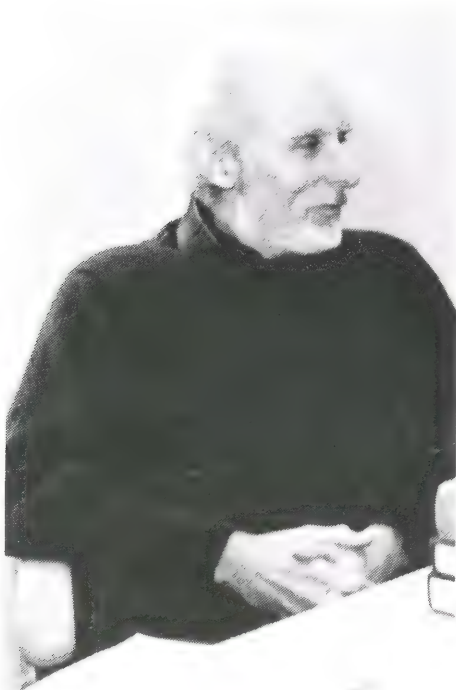
crawls with plankton,  
green algae,

supports without effort the great  
leviathan.

— Peter Bulton

# INTERVIEW: JACK GILBERT

by Tom Neeley



*Jack Gilbert, one of America's leading poets, appeared in Auburn early in November to read various poems from his two books, **Views of Jeopardy** and **Monolithos**. In 1962 **Views of Jeopardy** won the Yale Series of Younger Poets Award and in 1982 **Monolithos** was nominated for all three major poetry awards: the Pulitzer Prize, the National Book Critics Circle Award, and*

*the American Book Award. For the past several years he has lived in Greece but is currently the Writer-in-Residence at the University of Alabama.*

*When I first met Jack Gilbert on the steps of the Crenshaw Guest House he struck me as looking like a cross between Jacques Cousteau and Albert Einstein, with his short white beard and fine white hair. We entered his room and talked for well over an hour about everything from poetry to women to politics.*

**Circle Magazine:** Why do you write poetry?

**Jack Gilbert:** I think as much as anything else I write poetry as a kind of witnessing, trying to say the truth as I have seen it myself, not from a book or from what somebody told me.

I'm not interested in saying the obvious: the Vietnam War was good or the Vietnam War was bad. I'm not interested in making a distinction between lime green and fuchsia red. That's boring. I'm interested in the place where truth occurs in complexity, between the obvious, after the beginning.

Poetry is important; it's not recreation. I'm not interested in poetry as recreation.

Somebody has said—it's a cliché—the most powerful thing in

the world is an idea. You can see that now with women. When I was a kid, women got to be thirty-five or forty years old and they put their hair up in a bun on the back of their neck and they wore dark colored clothes and walked with a certain kind of gait. Now you see grandmothers who are not only beautiful and slender, but wonderfully alive, eager, growing, and full of appetite for their lives.

How did that happen? They say a little bit is nutrition but an enormous amount is the image of what a woman can be. I think poetry has a lot to do with that.

Poetry and the arts make us what we are. Poetry, along with the novel, film, and the better television, creates the world. W.H. Auden said, "Poetry exists in a valley where it makes nothing happen." I think it lives in a city where it makes almost everything happen, if, by poetry, I include the arts generally.

**CM:** What do you think poetry should do?

**JG:** I wish there were more poetry that dealt with major subjects. It's nice if you have a poem saying, "This is my life growing up in Georgia." That's okay too. But I wish there were poetry about life beyond that initial stage. What are we trying to get to? What do we want that's important, beyond getting the house paid off and sending the kids to college? That's respectable, even admirable. But we're going to die. Surely for some people that's not enough.

I'd like the arts to change the world. They have in the past. I think they will in the future.

CM: Do you think they are now?

JG: No. I think we're in a more technological period. More and more literature is involved in deconstructionism. Philosophy is largely technological. Most music is theoretical. Rock music has gotten stalled. The movies have virtually collapsed. Broadway's everybody's favorite example of decay. Nothing of importance has happened on Broadway for a long, long time.

CM: You've attended and taught at many colleges and universities in your lifetime. What do you think about the state of education?

JG: When I was at San Francisco State University a man came into class the first day and said, "This semester we're going to study *Moby Dick* with special attention to how often shoes are mentioned." There's a lot of that going on.

CM: Why shoes?

JG: You can quantify that. You don't have to be able to understand *Moby Dick*. You can talk about the themes, the symbols, or how many times shoes are mentioned without talking about *Moby Dick*.

We're living in the twentieth, nearly twenty-first century with a nineteenth century mind and that's why education, along with the arts, is so desperately important. If public education in this country fails, this country will fail. You can't run a modern civilization with a simplistic idea like the three r's.

CM: Lastly, what tips will you give Auburn's many aspiring poets?

JG: Don't get married. Don't have children if you want to be prosperous. Make sure you're in it for love, not for the career. There are much easier ways to make a lot of money. Don't write for the acclaim. Students come to me and say, "Help me! I've got to write, I'll die if I don't write." And I say, "If I can arrange for you to publish anonymously, would that be satisfying?" And they say, "No. If I can't sign it then no."

"Then you don't have to write. You have to be famous, but you don't have to write."

Don't do it for the fame. Fame will kill you.

#### DESCRIPTION OF HAPPINESS IN KOBENHAVN

All this windless day snow fell  
into the King's Garden  
where I walked, perfecting and growing old,  
abandoning one by one everybody:  
randomly in love with the paradise  
furnace of my mind. Now I sit in the dark,  
dreaming of a marble sun  
and its strictness. This  
is to tell you I am not coming back.  
To tell you instead of my private life  
among people who must wrestle their hearts  
in order to feel anything, as though it were  
unnatural. What I master by day  
still lapses in the night. But I go on  
with the cargo cult, blindly feeling the snow  
come down, learning to flower by tightening.

— Jack Gilbert

#### THE ABNORMAL IS NOT COURAGE

The Poles rode out from Warsaw against the German  
tanks on horses. Rode knowing, in sunlight, with sabers.  
A magnitude of beauty that allows me no peace.  
And yet this poem would lessen that day. Question  
the bravery. Say it's not courage. Call it a passion.  
Would say courage isn't that. Not at its best.  
It was impossible, and with form. They rode in sunlight.  
Were mangled. But I say courage is not the abnormal.  
Not the marvelous act. Not Macbeth with fine speeches.  
The worthless can manage in public, or for the moment.  
It is too near the whore's heart: the bounty of impulse,  
and the failure to sustain even small kindness.  
Not the marvelous act, but the evident conclusion of being.  
Not strangeness, but a leap forward of the same quality.  
Accomplishment. The even loyalty. But fresh.  
Not the Prodigal Son, nor Faustus. But Penelope.  
The thing steady and clear. Then the crescendo.  
The real form. The culmination. And the exceeding.  
Not the surprise. The amazed understanding. The marriage,  
not the month's rapture. Not the exception. The beauty  
that is of many days. Steady and clear.  
It is the normal excellence, of long accomplishment.

— Jack Gilbert

# KICKING AND PUNCHING, AU STYLE

by Kristy Seay



Dr. Barbara Schaer, Faculty Advisor of the Auburn University Taekwondo Club, concentrates on a Karate form of self defense. —Photograph by Madolyn Anderson

**L**ast July Dr. Barbara Schaer and her husband Walter, both faculty members at Auburn University, received black belts in the Korean martial art of Taekwondo, which translated, means “the way of kicking and punching.”

Dr. Schaer, a slender red-head, smiled as she said, “My husband and I started for a very strange reason.” Four years ago, she explained, the couple saw two men in white cotton karate uniforms leaving a Taekwondo studio. Immediately struck with the comfortable appearance of the uniforms, the couple decided to order suits for themselves to “loungue in at home.” The Taekwondo instructor agreed to order the suits for them and later invited the couple, since they already had proper attire, to participate in work-outs.

After taking part in work-outs, Dr. Schaer and her husband began discovering the benefits of Taekwondo: “It felt good. One needs to exercise, and the stretching [an integral part of work-outs] relaxes the body and takes the tension out.”

“No practice is the same,” she said. “It’s not boring or repetitive, and we use our minds as much as our physical prowess.”

And though she was not originally motivated by a desire to learn self-defense, Dr. Schaer said, “You hear of all the horror stories. Just because we’re women, we should have some way to protect ourselves.... Skills develop self-assuredness and self-respect.”

“Taekwondo is an individual sport, and everyone masters it at his own level,” she said. “You decide what you want to do until you have done your best.”

In describing the requirements involved in moving the eight belts from the beginner’s white to the advanced black, she stressed the importance of attitude: “If you can accept yourself with your limitations, it’s more likely you’ll be happier [with your progress in Taekwondo] and feel like going

ahead. With everything you do in life, you have to face failure. In Taekwondo, you set your own goals and become your own master."

To progress from one belt to the next, the student must master a variety of skills, including "learning basic movements—how to punch and kick in many different ways."

At each level, the student learns "forms," which are sequences of all the basic Taekwondo movements. Each form, identified by names like Won-Hyo and Tan-Gun, is a unique combination of movements similar to dance. The learning of these forms, Dr. Schaer explained, "becomes an art."

Later, the student learns to spar, or box, martial-arts style, with a partner in anticipated sequences so that both can practice attacking and defending without injury. As the student becomes more skillful, he may participate in free sparring, "a speeded up free rehearsal of all the movements he can bring to mind."

After developing "good basic movements," the advanced student also learns "good form and skills" for breaking wood and later, bricks.

Besides learning physical skills, the student studies the cultural, philosophical, and historical foundations of Taekwondo as well. In so doing, the student learns the importance of discipline, courtesy, and respect for himself and others. As Dr. Schaer said, "As you learn these ways, you have to learn social discipline—you have to put meaning to each one of the skills. Skills without discipline is total irresponsibility."

As the student becomes more advanced, the tests increase in difficulty and length. The black belt test which Dr. Schaer, her husband, and thirteen other students between the ages of 21 and 60 took in Cape Girardeau, Missouri, in July lasted seven hours and required the students to show mastery of 10 forms, 30 anticipated sparring sequences, various breaking techniques, free sparring, and knowledge of the foundations of Taekwondo. During the seven hours, the students were not permitted to eat and were allowed water breaks only once every two hours. Grueling as the test was, Dr. Schaer said without hesitation, "It was worth it."

Though Dr. Schaer has achieved an advanced level in Taekwondo, which only 5 percent of all white belts do, she said, I may be a black belt, but I'm really not that good." As there are 10 degrees of black belt, she sees herself as a "beginner" who has "barely tapped the surface." She said, "A first degree black belt means you've just begun."

Dr. Schaer's Sah-Bum-Nim, or instructor, for the past two years is Young Park, 09 IE, a fourth degree black belt who began studying Taekwondo in his hometown of Seoul, South Korea, when he was 10 years old. Dr. Schaer described Park as "a real master who has mastered the martial art himself and who can help others to be their own master."

Park, an unassuming Korean man with a gentle voice, explained that Taekwondo originated approximately 3000 years ago, developing in various stages in India, China, and finally Korea.

In Korea, Taekwondo is the national sport and taught, according to Park, "not for fighting, but for sports and education, for mental and physical health." He explained that while meditation and mental practice are emphasized in Korea, many American Taekwondo schools "forget all but self-defense."

While Park does teach self-defense, he explained that Taekwondo also builds self-confidence, discipline, education, physical strength, and endurance. He said, "Taekwondo teaches the student to keep trying to meet challenges. I recommend it to everybody."

And, in fact, many AU students and faculty members participate in Taekwondo via the AU Taekwondo Club, which Park and Dr. Schaer founded one year ago. Club attendance averages approximately 50 members, beginning and advanced, each quarter. Dr. Schaer continues to serve as faculty advisor for the club, while Park oversees practices led by six members who are black belts. Since Park will be graduating from AU and leaving Auburn this year, he is training the advanced members to become full-fledged instructors.

In summarizing the effect Taekwondo has had on her life, Dr. Schaer said, "I think Taekwondo builds an indomitable spirit. I've failed before, but I'm not afraid to fail again. You just have to keep trying no matter what the odds."

## ANTHROPOLOGY

In Guanajuato I see the dead  
Stand in glass cases  
Dressed in their best clothes.  
A Mexican general in green  
Khaki with heavy gold braid  
Comes to attention.  
A Russian in horn-rimmed  
Glasses who looks like Trotsky  
Eyes a trim British ambassador  
In a pompous blue suit.  
Reeking of muscatel,  
A Peruvian in black alpaca  
Rubs elbows at the bar  
With a west-country Irishman  
In scratchy brown tweed.  
I open the doors of their cases,  
And when I touch them,  
They're cool and salty,  
Like Jesus, I think.  
I wonder when they're going back  
Into the mine that preserves them.  
I want to go with them,  
Not to become dead,  
Not to bring up more dead  
To put in glass cases,  
But to get life  
From the dead and not be dead.

— Peter Huggins

## ENTHRALL

The crane flew from your palm  
and lit on my blouse  
where I pinned it still.  
A bird shape your friend  
Mr. Heroshig remembered  
for happiness, youth eternal, fidelity.  
A shape with wings, an open hand,  
spreading gold to my breast.  
Lapis blue eyes,  
the cloisonne stare holds fast.  
Yet fisted legs and chest  
beg for flight  
bound over my heart.

— Blair Hobbs

# FINE ART



Oil Painting by Robert Andrews



Relief Print by Bunny Woodward



Oil Painting by Scott Peek



Relief Print by Andrew Cost



# THE STAND IN

by Phil Pierce

**M**y fingers brush the top of the water, disturbing it for the first time. The sun flashes on the surface and into my eyes as I dry my hand on the pants leg of my dark brown suit.

Joel's head bursts from the water five feet from where I kneel by the pool's edge. He bobs, shakes away a sheet of water as those lovely, contemptibly blue eyes focus on me.

I am in the presence of royalty. Hail.

"You're early," he says, not in the least irritated. "I had thought to be out and showered before you got here."

"I thought it would be harder to find my way," I say, trying half-heartedly to behave normally.

"You must have gotten up before sunrise," he speculates, treading water. "It's—what? Three hundred miles?"

"Three hundred twenty-eight point four," I answer, a little embarrassed at the knowledge.

"Always exact," he says. His mouth curls into a smile rich with ignorance.

*A beat as we eye each other,* scribbles the playwright in my head.

"Well," Joel says, beginning to move, "let me get dried off and I'll show you around."

He churns through the water toward a towel at the pool's other end. The pool is perfect, not small enough to mock me or big enough to hide me. I knew it would be perfect, just from the way he said, "my pool."

*Come one up. I'll show you around. We can hit the town, take in a flick, swim in my pool.*

He swings onto the rounded concrete edge and scrubs his head with the towel. His skin is the same as it was in school: a little pale, but smooth and tight. Just not meant to be tan, I guess.

What a guy. He's at home everywhere, even at home.

And I have come three hundred and twenty-eight point four miles to drown myself in his swimming pool.

He walks around the pool, close to the edge, economizing his steps. I stand to meet him. "I hope you have something a little more informal than that to wear," he says, flicking at my suit with his hand. "Nice suit."

"Thanks," I say, glad he likes it.

The towel hangs like a too-short cape from his shoulders. A few drops of water remain on his skin, having escaped the quick brush-over he has given his body. Both of us are dressed up today.

"I'll help you unload your stuff," he says, and leads me to my car. "There's not much," I say, hurrying to remove the suitcase and travel bag. "I'll get it."

"I'm your host," he insists, grabbing the suitcase. His hand comes up alongside his navel. "Light!" he says.

Saying no more, we walk up to his door and go inside the house. The air here smells controlled and careful, too careful for Joel. Still, he fits.

So this is it, the factory from which Joel sprang energetically and haphazardly into our lives. I wonder if they have a room somewhere in this place for everything he broke coming up.

"Excuse me a minute," he says. "I gotta go to the bathroom." I nod assent.

As he leaves the room I step into the hall behind him. Lining the wall are framed pictures, large portraits and photographic collages: here a picture of Joel in cap and gown, looking relieved and, as always, energetic; here a sepia-toned, creased photo of people long dead; here a 25-year-old 8 x 10 of a young couple. The pictures flow on along the wall, one placed slightly lower or higher than the next, like notes of music on a scale.

The melody pauses as I linger on one sustained note, a picture of a child. His skin and meticulously combed hair are fair, his eyes wide and blue and innocent, his teeth bared, straight, white; here is milk and honey cast in a delicate mold and stuffed through a plaid shirt.

After a long moment I move on to a picture of this child with an old man, then to a small framed polaroid of another stunning child, a girl, sitting on the poolside with her legs in the water and her dry, blonde hair brushed back.

"My sister," says Joel behind me. "She's six. You'll meet her if you stay in town till my folks come back on Saturday."

I am silent, uncommitted.

"Well," he says, "I'll show you your room and we'll start catching up on things." He has thrown on some wrinkled clothes, probably unwashed from a previous wearing. We go back to the first room, pick up my empty bags and take them to a comfortable looking bedroom at the end of the hallway.

We stand in the room for a minute, then Joel turns. "Here, let's sit in the living room. It's my favorite place in the house," he tells the hallway in front of him. We walk through the house until we come to a large, shag-carpeted room separated from a kitchen area by hanging cabinets and a bar. I remember that my father hates shag carpeting ("too much trouble"). Through a pair of sliding glass doors I can see a canopied patio and The Pool.

"This is supposedly a family room, but most of the stuff in it is mine," Joel says. He points to a low, three-tiered bookcase against one wall. "You can read anything you want while you're here. Most of these books are about astronomy or music, but there are a few novels there you might like, and a Tennessee Williams collection. You'll need something to do while I'm at my store."

He moves along to a large, old picture in what looks like an expensive frame. "That's my grandfather, who died when I was eleven," he says. "He was walking down the street when they took the picture and somebody walked in front of his left leg, so they had to paint it on. Can't tell much, can you?" He pivots. "That's his cane in the corner. Gave it to me before he died. He didn't use it much. He wasn't crippled or anything, just a little arthritis. I used to pretend I had twisted my ankle so I could walk around with it." He grins devilishly.

"And this is my baby," he says, striding over to a well-polished, black baby-grand piano. "I've been working on some new stuff. Play it for you in a little while, but first let's talk. Have a seat." He gestures toward a plush gray sofa-and-chair set next to the glass doors.

"Thanks," I say, sitting. He remains standing.

"Want something to drink?" he asks, walking toward the refrigerator.

"No, thanks," I answer. "I'll have something later."

Craning my neck, I look out at the shimmering pool. Ah, won't he be shocked, so surprised. He has no idea. He'll have to find me and make the calls and wonder why. But he's smart. He'll figure it out, and then... every time he sees it, or any pool, for that matter—who knows? He may even have it filled up with concrete. Nah, probably not. But he'll know.

Joel returns with a tall glass of Orange Crush and sits in the chair.

"So how's the old stomping ground?" he asks. "Making it without me?"

No better than we made it with you. Of course, the question

isn't really fair; despite his absence, in no way are we without Joel.

"We're all getting along all right," I reply, forcing pleasantries. "The basketball team misses you, though. You were their loudest fan, and lately they haven't been doing so hot."

"Yeah, I noticed that. Probably because they lost Evans, though, not me. Boy could he smoke 'em." A pause. "You're about finished, aren't you?"

"Yeah," I say. Closer than you think, buddy. "September."

"I suppose you'll have some top-notch job offers coming in. Grades still up?"

"Yeah. School's going well. Glad for the break, though."

"Enjoy it. When you start working you'll expect those breaks and they won't come, except maybe once a year, and then you're so tired you won't really do anything you want to. How's Sylvia?"

He says her name as if she were simply a friend's girlfriend, as if all the knowledge he had of her he'd gained through me. There is no glimmer of that vital remembrance in his eyes. Can he have forgotten? No, of course not. But it's almost like he never noticed her.

Ah, Sylvia, for whom life itself was an organism to be teased and made love to. Before her there had been high school crushes and early college infatuations, but never love, not for me.

And she was mine, from first meeting, though not perhaps first sight, as surely as if God himself had pointed her out to me and pronounced it so. All those others who took her, even the ones before we met, were trespassing. I resent them, but not her. Her experience of them was a part of her strange passion for life, something I can accept though not identify with. They never even noticed it, especially not Joel.

My brother, my friend, the second person I met upon arriving on campus, had blundered in good-naturedly before my startled eyes and whisked her off to his bed, the bed I had to look at every time I went over for a game of chess or a study session. Only in little asides did he make reference to it—he never blabbed about his conquests, I'll give him that—but every suggestion was a dart.

Of course he would never have done it had he known. But how could he not know? I had told him I was in love. Sure, I never mentioned a name, but he should have seen it if he knew me at all.

And after that, after the first sting had faded and time had passed and Sylvia and I started seeing each other, it was like even then he didn't make the connection. Somehow he seemed to have forgotten all I had told him. Never so much as an "Oh no—was she the one? I'm sorry."

Of course, objectively, I know it's not that big a deal, sex isn't, at least to most people. And if it is a big deal to you, then everybody thinks you're some kind of weirdo, like one of those out-to lunch guys in Faulkner's books. I guess I should have quit being hurt and shocked by it in high school, but I didn't. Don't know why. I just didn't.

Funny thing, I could never muster up any hate for Joel when he was around, even when Sylvia and I were in the same room with him. When he left, I thought it would be all right, but as much as I loved her, as much as she seemed to love me, he was there with us every time we were together.

And would be, I knew, every time; and so things stopped.

"You're asking the wrong man," I say, smiling.

"Ho, you two having trouble?"

"No trouble. We're just not together anymore. I'd rather not discuss it."

"Okay. Sorry. Somebody better'll come along. Just be patient." He effortlessly switches his train of thought to another track. "Remind me before you leave to give you a book I borrowed from Dr. Abbott and never returned. I'd hate to have him mad at me."

"Okay," I say.

Joel gulps the last of the Orange Crush and rises. He claps his hand on my shoulder. "Let me play one of my new tunes for you," he says, seating himself on the bench in front of the piano.

I walk over and stand in the corner behind him as his fingers begin gently pressing the keys. Roaming the room, my eyes land on the cane in the opposite corner. It is simple: light wood heavily coated with light varnish. The handle only slightly worn, as if someone bought or made it on a whim, then decided he didn't really want it. Joel evidently treasures it more than his grandfather did.

He plays a sweet melody, arranged so well that it sounds emotive without ever becoming sappy. As he plays, Joel's lips move, quietly mouthing not words but nuances.

The cane, suffocated by the thick, hard varnish, wheezes softly.

The song ends in a sweeping crescendo that is a bit dramatic, though effective. Joel lifts his fingers and holds them, trembling slightly, a fraction of an inch above the keys, bathing them in some imagined afterglow. Slowly, he turns his head. "What do you think?" he asks.

"I think it's pretty wonderful," I concede.

"Well, it's not all that good," he says. "I don't have any lyrics yet. Maybe you can help me write some while you're here."

The cane sits solemnly, whimpering a bit, as if to say, I am dead and unneeded. Ripped by a man from its mother tree, stripped and violated and tossed aside, its indignity preserved by a stifling, transparent coat, its moan floats across this air that smells of music, beauty and order.

"Come on. I'll take you for a spin, we'll grab some lunch, check out the neighborhood," Joel says, rising from the bench. How well he orchestrates, extemporaneously conducting his affairs. Things, people, moments respond to his touch, offering easy consent to his every wish. I resent these assumptions, yet something about him makes me want to comply.

When will I do it? When, in the deluge of lunches and auditions and conversations and joyrides, will there be an appropriate intermission for my peaceful little act of protest? And then, by the time he comes rolling in from his big store, fresh from a day with his newly won friends, who's to say the meaning of my gesture won't have evaporated innocuously away into this classy uptown air?

"Coming?"

From the corner the wood shouts, screams, shrieks its complaint. I reach and touch, massaging ten years of Joel's fingerprints for a moment, then slide both hands to the base of the cane.

Joel's back assumes compliance. A sound, the beginning of a word, escapes his throat.

And then *Crack!* I am upon him, arcing the unforgiving wood into the small of his back. he stumbles almost to his hands and knees, thumping at the air with his head. I cannot see his face.

Tiny drops of icy sweat start covering my skin and my tongue swells. *Crack!* the stick slams against his hip and he rolls over, his face turning toward me.

I wonder what he sees.

Joel's eyes are wide, full of fear and horror and amazement and intense fascination. A furrow appears in his brow as he tries to find a friend, a kindred spirit, somewhere in the flesh and wood before him.

There is, I know and have always known, beauty within him. Were I not his attacker, I might stoop and embrace him, pat his bruised back and lift him up. But I am his attacker; he has been mine, and never bent toward me.

Out of place, his face is. I swing the cane through the air, hitting the nothing three inches from his nose and bringing his back round again. A bit more easily, I strike his side below the rib cage.

I wish I had words. I could have planned them, rehearsed, rewritten, but I saw no need, so there are none. If he needs them he'll make them himself, anyway, and be more satisfied with his than he could be with any of mine. We are more pure now without them. It seems a good time to leave.

So - with a *Crack!* for good measure or One For The Road - I leave, descending through the sliding doors toward my car and depositing the cane on a strip of zoysia grass halfway to the pool.

I climb into the car and start the engine. In my rearview mirror I can see him still crouching inside the house, awaiting my departure.

And so I drive the first of three hundred twenty-eight point four miles. Fresh spring air gushes through the rolled-down windows and there's a great song on the radio, a pop number with a catchy melody and some heavenly minor chords on the middle eight. I turn it up and smile. It sounds like somebody stole one of Joel's.

## CONTRIBUTORS

**Bill Alger**, a senior in Visual Arts, is from Huntsville.

**Robert Andrews**, a graduate of Auburn in Visual Arts, is from Birmingham.

**Eric Bagwell**, a freshman in pre-Architecture, is from Huntsville.

**Ken Boyte**, a senior in Journalism, is from Phenix City.

**Peter Button**, a senior in English, is from Birmingham.

**Kelly Caldwell**, a senior in English, is from Athens, Georgia.

**Andrew Cost**, a senior in Visual Arts, is from Birmingham.

**Melissa Dickson**, a freshman in Visual Arts, is from Ozark.

**Blair Hobbs**, a graduate assistant in the English Department, is from Auburn. She was listed among the 1985 Academy of Poets.

**Nancy Lewis**, a senior in Visual Arts, is from Auburn.

**Marian Motley-Carache**, a graduate student in English, is from Ternigan. Her short stories have won several awards including a recent honorable mention in Sigma Tau Delta's 1985 National Herbert L. Hughes Award.

**Alan Neck**, a senior in Visual Arts, is from Auburn.

**Tom Neeley**, a sophomore in English, is from Memphis, Tennessee.

**Avivi Osborne**, a senior in Speech Communications, is from Marietta, Georgia.

**Jeffery Owens**, a senior in Architect, is from Montgomery.

**Scott Peek**, a senior in Visual Arts, is from Ozark.

**Phil Pierce**, a graduate in Journalism, is from Clanton.

**Mike Reece**, a senior in Visual Arts, is from Wheaton, Illinois.

**Theresa Rudy**, a sophomore in English, is from Marietta, Georgia.

**Kristy Seay** is a graduate assistant at Auburn University.

**Bunny Woodward**, a senior in Visual Arts, is from Birmingham.

